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Care Days bring health services to Dufferin County residents

Written By JAMES MATTHEWS

Care Days aim to make it easier to access health and social care in Dufferin County.

Dave Pearson, the Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team's executive director, told Dufferin County council during its Feb. 26 meeting that Care Days are planned for Dufferin and Caledon until June.

The Care Days are opportunities to provide more health care closer to home.

?As we've seen there's been a lot more uptake and reception from the public,? Pearson said.

Care Days are catching on in the community and are attracting attention from other health teams and the province.

The team will add the ability to identify, register, and support residents seeking access to local team-based care that includes physicians and nurse practitioners.

While they wait to be connected, Pearson said the type of Care Days offered can be customized to targeted health care needs such as cancer screening, chronic disease support, or diabetes day.

Food insecurity is of interest in the county, he said. And the team would like the opportunity to respond to that.

Pearson said people who have been without a physician for a number of years need that ?basic health? taken care of.

?We can do all of those things now,? he said. ?Our aim is to generate more visual and marketed messaging to people of our community so they can gain trust and connection with local providers.?

Pearson added, ?We are days away from finalizing a communications package and website that we will share with county council.?

?This is the right care at the right time, the right place,? he said.

The team has a website in the works with the aim of enabling members of the public to register for Care Days.

?If you are unattached to a team of providers or to a family physician and you would like to access care locally, we would like to know about you,? Pearson said. ?We would like to offer you care.?

Pearson said many members of the Dufferin community may be more familiar with county facilities and locations than health care facilities. He said they would like to, at times, pare down the team and offer services in such settings as libraries.

He asked councillors to reach out to the team if they knew of an area of care that would benefit people on Care Day, or if there was a community location that might be a suitable venue.

?Please let us know, and we can work with you to plan a Care Day event,? Pearson said.

Councillor Fred Nix, who is also Mono's deputy mayor, asked how many people have availed of Care Days in the county.

Pearson said some of the events have drawn as few as three people, while others have attracted as many as 30, 40, or more.

?That may seem like a low uptake, and I get that,? Pearson said.

But he said the teams are at a stage where they're learning to work together. And health service providers aren't known to go to the communities. Rather, he said, they expect the community to go to them.

?It's changing the relationship, and that takes time, it takes trust, and it takes a level of commitment,? Pearson said.